



ARIZONA OFFICE OF
**PROBLEM
GAMBLING**

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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With Problem Gambling Issues In The News, Get The Best Information On Warning Signs, Impacts

*Arizona Office of Problem Gambling Available As Resources for Media;
Help Available For Problem Gambling By Calling **1.800.NEXT STEP***

PHOENIX, Arizona (May 9, 2006) — The issue of problem gambling has been in the news again recently, with a high-profile local incident and two major professional athletes talking about their gambling problems.

Just in the past week...

- An Ahwatukee woman was arrested and charged with taking over \$25,000 from her parent-teacher organization, and tried to pay back the money by gambling at local casinos. She told police that she has a gambling problem.

- Popular professional golfer John Daly said he's lost more than \$60 million over the past 12 years gambling, and worried that problem gambling would "ruin" him if he didn't get it under control.

- And Phoenix Suns legend Charles Barkley said in an ESPN interview that he's lost \$10 million gambling and acknowledged that he needs to do something about his gambling problem.

The Arizona Office of Problem Gaming is working to educate Arizonans to recognize the signs of problem gambling.

As part of that effort, experts from the office are available as a resource to the news media in educating the public about the signs and impacts of problem gambling on individuals and their families. In addition, the Office makes available responsible gambling guidelines for adults who choose to gamble. These guidelines do not encourage people to gamble, but offer suggestions on how people can minimize the likelihood of developing gambling problems.

Help for problem gambling.

1.800.NEXTSTEP
(1.800.639.8738)

The office encourages those who think they have a problem or know someone who may have a problem to call **1.800.NEXT STEP** to get help.

Here are some of the warning signs of problem gambling:

- Betting more and more money over time
- Spending more time gambling than planned
- Lying to people about gambling
- Using gambling to escape problems
- Borrowing to replace lost money
- Using credit to gamble
- Gambling to get lost money back
- Unsuccessfully trying to cut back or quit
- Gambling alone
- Losing interest in other activities

“Problem gambling can affect individuals and their families from all walks of life, just as we’ve been reminded in recent days,” said Rick Pyper, Director of the Arizona Office of Problem Gambling. “Information and help are always available by calling **1.800.NEXT STEP**. If people are aware of the warning signs, they should call at the first indication that there might be a problem.”

The **1.800.NEXT STEP** number provides those concerned with their own gambling or those worried about loved ones with a variety of resources to help them deal with the issues caused by problem gambling. Those resources include:

- How to recognize the warning signs of problem gambling
- Information on Tribal/State-funded treatment and counseling
- Information on Gamblers Anonymous meetings
- Help for families affected by problem gambling

These resources and additional information are also available online at the Arizona Office of Problem Gambling’s web site, <http://www.problemgambling.az.gov/>.

“The **1.800.NEXT STEP** number is a tremendous resource for these individuals and their loved ones, and we encourage anyone who thinks they or someone they know may have a gambling problem to call,” Pyper said.